

VZCZCXRO5767
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV
DE RUEHKU #0216/01 0551328
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 241328Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0865
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000216

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP (BJACKSON), NEA/PPD (DBENZE), ECA/PE/C/CU
(MBENSON)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OEXC](#) [OIIP](#) [SCUL](#) [ZR](#)

SUBJECT: CULTURAL ENVOY, GINA LORING, INSPIRES SOCIAL ACTIVISM
THROUGH CREATIVE WRITING

¶1. Summary: The Gina Loring Cultural Envoy program from January 26 to February 5, 2008 supported the MSP goal of promotion of democracy in Kuwait by teaching high school students how to write and perform drama that raises societal awareness of civil issues. The students' final project, a play produced with Ms. Loring's guidance and performed before other students and their parents, critically analyzed the educational system in Kuwait, gender imbalance, social inequities, corruption, and stereotyping. As a well-known African-American poet and singer, Ms. Loring also thrilled large audiences of Kuwaitis, in other venues, with poetry readings and songs in commemoration of Black History Month. Loring's literary gifts and ability to connect with younger Kuwaitis inspired them with new techniques for addressing the inequalities that are an obstacle to Kuwait's societal development. End Summary.

Students Promote Social Activism Through Writing

¶2. Ms. Gina Loring, a recording artist and spoken-word poet from Los Angeles, visited Kuwait from January 26 - February 5, 2008 to conduct a ten-day creative writing workshop for Kuwaiti high school students, two poetry readings, and a public performance of her poetry and songs. The intensive workshop required the students to give up their winter vacation and perform the play before a live audience comprised of fellow students, their parents and invited guests. Each of the students was encouraged to write about social issues in Kuwait and to be candid about areas for improvement in governance, and then put it all together in a single play. During the course, the young artists learned about various forms of writing, the creative writing process, how to use writing as a tool for community activism, and how to use dramatic presentations to make their voices heard.

Inspiring Kuwait's Youth with a Sense of their Own Potential

¶3. The goal of the Cultural Envoy program was to support the development of Democracy in Kuwait by teaching young people how to write and perform social consciousness-raising material that is appropriate and effective for Kuwait. Gina Loring's workshop exceeded that goal by delivering an uplifting message to youth that their voices are important and worthy of attention. One budding writer commented, "In the beginning, all of us felt incapable of writing an entire play in the workshop, but with Ms. Gina Loring and her encouragement we were able to realize new abilities." Another student echoed the sentiment saying, "I would never have believed we could do this." As the workshop progressed, the students began to realize their potential as opinion leaders as they recognized the important social issues of Kuwait and sharpened their skills to speak about them. By developing leadership and critical analysis skills among some of Kuwait's young people, we have made progress in supporting the expansion of democracy in Kuwait, a major MSP goal.

Quite an Act in her Own Right

¶4. As a well-known African-American poet and singer, Ms. Loring thrilled large audiences of Kuwaitis, in three other public venues, with readings of her poetry and the singing of her songs in commemoration of Black History Month. Her use of poetry as a tool for social change had special resonance for Arab audiences as poetry is a highly-respected traditional art form in the Middle East.

Media Coverage

¶5. There was also a local television interview of Gina Loring and extensive coverage of her visit in the local press:

2/3/08, Gina Loring special interview, Awan, Full page, 2 Photos.
2/3/08, Gina Loring - Black History Month, KUNA, English and Arabic, Online report, 5 Photos.
2/5/08, Gina Loring - Black History Month, Al Qabas, 1 column, No Photos.
2/5/08, Gina Loring - Black History Month, Al Nahar, one-half page, 1 Photo.
2/5/08, Gina Loring - Black History Month, Kuwait Times, one-half Pg, 2 Photos.
2/5/08, Gina Loring - Black History Month, Arab Times, one-half pg, 2 Photos.
2/6/08, Gina Loring - Black History Month, Al Rai, Pg 36, one-half pg, 3 Photos.
2/7/08, Gina Loring - Black History Month, Al Qabas, Pg 34, one-quarter Pg, 2 Photos.

KUWAIT 00000216 002 OF 002

Gina Loring would be Welcome Back Anytime

¶6. Embassy Kuwait thanks ECA/PE/C/CU for supporting and arranging Gina Loring's visit to Kuwait. She was an excellent speaker who brought a freshness and creativity to young Kuwaitis and ignited in them an enthusiasm for activism, civil rights, and citizens' empowerment in their country. Through her programs, we estimate that we were able to reach at least 500 Kuwaitis directly, and several thousand more through the media. Gina Loring was a pleasure to work with and we would welcome the opportunity to host her again for future programs.

LENDERKING